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**MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Robert S. McNamara
The Secretary of Defense**

SUBJECT : Comments on Current Indications of Change in Communist Activity Patterns in the DMZ Area

1. In response to your 25 July telephone call to Mr. Helms, we have reviewed the evidence on current Communist military activity in the DMZ area. Our conclusions are outlined below.

2. There are two Communist command entities whose behavior is germane to the problem at hand: the DMZ Front Headquarters/Main and the DMZ Front Headquarters/Forward. DMZ Front/Main was activated in mid-1966 and exercised over-all control as well as immediate tactical direction of Vietnamese Communist military units in the DMZ area. In October 1966, DMZ Headquarters/Forward was activated and appeared to assume the immediate tactical direction function subordinate to the over-all command authority of DMZ Front Headquarters/Main. It is the DMZ Front Headquarters/Forward that has significantly reduced its []

activity in the past three weeks.

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4. Although elements of three and possibly four regiments (the 29th, 90th, 803rd and 812th) seem to have withdrawn north of the DMZ in the past few weeks, elements of four regiments of the DMZ Front (the 29th, 31st, 270th and 803rd) remain south of the DMZ. Netting this out, it appears that about four battalions (or battalion-equivalents) have withdrawn north while perhaps seven battalions (or battalion-equivalents) plus additional reconnaissance and sapper units remain south of the DMZ. At least some of this deployment activity is readily explainable. The 812th regiment, for example, had been operating south of the DMZ for some time and would logically have been due for rotation by the end of June. Those elements of the 29th and 90th regiments which have withdrawn were heavily engaged in the Con Thien area in late June and the first ten days of July, where they suffered very heavy losses. They almost certainly are in need of rest, regroupment and replenishment.

5. There are three hypotheses which would account for the current pattern of Communist military activity in the DMZ area:

- a. Some form of tactical reorganization is in progress;
- b. One operational phase has been completed and preparations are being made for another;
- c. We are witnessing some form of deliberate disengagement.

6. Our evidence is too tenuous to indicate that a tactical reorganization is in train, so for the moment this hypothesis must be put aside.

7. The most plausible explanation for the current activity pattern is that the enemy has completed one operational phase and is regrouping in preparation for another. A number of prisoners taken in the DMZ area earlier this year described plans for a series of phased operations to be conducted during the spring and early summer. Small unit patrol actions were to be conducted through March to prepare the battlefield for a two-phased "spring-summer" campaign. The first phase was to consist of company-sized operations and was to last into May; the final phase was to consist of larger unit operations to be carried out until around 20 July. This plan seems to have been adhered to. If we accept the veracity of our prisoners' description of the plan, we can readily account for the unit redeployment

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which seems to be in process and the stand-down of the tactical control station, i. e., DMZ Front Headquarters/Forward.

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